

MAINE'S STATE-SPONSORED

TOURISM PUBLICATIONS

- A BRIEF SYNOPSIS

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State government in Maine has included a tourism agency of record for most of the past sixty years.

Established in 1927 as the Maine Development Commission, (MDC), (and subsequently known as the Dept. of Industry and Commerce; the Dept. of Economic Development; the Dept. of Commerce and Industry; the State Development Office; and the Dept. of Economic and Community Development), this agency has always worked in close cooperation with the Maine Publicity Bureau in a unique relationship on behalf of the state's tourism industry.

The MDC's beginnings go back to 1925. That year, Ralph O. Brewster (later to become a U.S. Senator), who had been a member of the Publicity Bureau's Executive Committee since its inception, was elected Governor of Maine. Members of the Publicity Bureau were instrumental in the passage of the legislative appropriation of \$25,000 a year for two years - to be spent exclusively for the gathering of information and the printing of booklets, folders and maps to be used in the advertising and promoting the State of Maine.

As there was an existing statute which did not allow State money to be turned over to a private organization, the Legislature also created the Maine Development Association,

made up of a County Chairman from each of the sixteen counties, who appointed committees in each city and town to see that an article was put into the city budget or town warrant to vote for publicizing and advertising the State of Maine. (This expenditure was permissible under an act of the Legislature allowing cities and towns to appropriate money for such a purpose - not to exceed one mill of the city or town valuation.) The MDA could then expend these appropriations, together with any funds granted by the Legislature, on tourism promotion for the state.

Under this arrangement, the Maine Publicity Bureau then became the service organization to handle the inquiries generated by State advertising, which has been a part of the Publicity Bureau's fulfillment obligations to the present. Several of the Bureau's executive officers constituted an Advisory Board that sat with the Governor and Council and the MDA to determine the specific media in which advertising should be placed.

So successful was this cooperative effort between a government agency and a private sector business organization that, in 1927, the Legislature raised its tourism appropriation to \$50,000 a year for two years and set up the Maine Development Commission.

The MDA was then abandoned and its most important structural features were incorporated into the Maine Publicity Bureau. The new concept established the relative positions of an

official state agency as the "wholesaler" for State of Maine promotion, and the Maine Publicity Bureau, voluntarily supported by individuals, businesses, and communities, as the "retailer". This partnership was developed by actual practice over the ensuing years to the point where its effectiveness gave Maine an advertising, promotion, and service mechanism unequalled by any other state.

During the ensuing years, the Development Commission began to expend a portion of its funds on descriptive publications that would enhance and complement the information-based literature the Publicity Bureau was producing.

I. GENERIC COLOR PIECES

This joint publications effort reached a period of great effectiveness between 1940 and 1970. The MDC developed several titles, the most successful of which was called "Maine - the Land of Remembered Vacations". Produced biennially for many years until 1960, it became the forerunner of a 1960's "Maine Vacation Guide", a 32-page color photo-filled booklet.

These publications filled a vital need, in that they introduced their readers to Maine via pictures as well as words.

II. TEASER

Another essential state-sponsored brochure was "Maine - Complete Vacationland". Produced in an accordion-fold, 4" x 9" format, it acted as a "teaser" by briefly extolling the state's many recreational virtues, then offering the user an address and number with which to write or call for more specific details on whatever particular subjects were of interest. This is where the Publicity Bureau would (and still does) take over in providing the most comprehensive, single-source, state-wide compilation of travel-based information in a variety of specialized publications. The "teaser", in its compact, lightweight format, was a relatively inexpensive response piece that was economical to use for bulk requests for Maine information, such as from out-of-state travel agencies, or for meetings, conventions, etc.

III. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Requests from school children are a fact-of-life for any state tourism agency. Historically, as many as 25,000 - 35,000 such inquiries are received here annually, each requesting facts, figures, pictures, and more. From c. 1940 until 1968, the State printed "Facts About Maine", which was specifically designed to respond to these kinds of questions.

By the 1960's, "Maine - The Pine Tree State" had also emerged. Sometimes referred to as the "Governor's folder",

because it contained a photograph of, and a message from, Maine's Chief Executive, this brochure gained immense popularity among school children and educators alike.

IV. HIGHWAY MAP

Although never a state tourism agency publication, the Maine Highway Map has, for more than 35 years, been the single most requested piece of Maine travel literature. The Maine map was a State Highway Commission (later Dept. of Transportation) publication from the early 1930's until 1979. Since then, private enterprise (via the Maine Publicity Bureau and DeLorme Publishing Company) has provided sufficient quantities of Maine maps to enable all prospective Maine visitors to receive a free copy on request. In-state, however, the map is a cost item.

V. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Various state agencies (including the tourism office) have, at various times, addressed specific areas of interest to Maine visitors and travelers in individual publications. These subjects include: fall foliage, covered bridges, state parks, hiking, canoeing, boating, forest campsites, and many others.